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CHEYNE'S BAMPTON LECTURES ON THE
PSALTER.

By Prof. EDWARD L. CURTIS, PH. D.,

Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

These are notable lectures.* The author evidently so regards them. He seems, for the sake of corrections and the addition of notes and appendices, to have delayed their publication nearly two years after their delivery. He has also prepared an elaborate introduction, explaining their origin and critical basis, and illustrating some of their features. This introduction is most interesting, for it is really the author's *apologia pro vita sua*. It shows how the pupil of Ewald has become substantially in accord with Kuenen. It reveals also the fine spirit of Dr. Cheyne, his sensitiveness to the effect of his critical views upon religious faith, and his ardent desire that criticism should be hallowed by the love of Christ.

The lectures fall into two distinct groups. The first group, Nos. I-V, forms an introduction to the Psalter, both as a whole and also to each psalm. The second group, Nos. VI-VIII, gives a sketch of the origin of the leading religious ideas of the Psalter. It is with the first group that this review has particularly to do.

The aim of the entire work is to confirm the views respecting the Old Testament of the school of criticism represented by Robertson Smith, Wellhausen, Kuenen and others, with whom Dr. Cheyne is in substantial agreement. We thus recognize at once the importance to the author of these lectures, and the reason for their extended introduction and the very full notes with which they are elaborated, for the testimony of the Psalter is needed to substantiate his critical

*The Origin and Religious contents of the Psalter in the light of Old Testament criticism and the History of Religions, with an Introduction and Appendices. Eight Lectures preached before the University of Oxford, in the year 1889, on the foundation of the late Rev. John Bampton, M. A., Canon of Salisbury, by Thomas Kelly Cheyne, M. A., D. D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, Canon of Rochester. New York: Thomas Whittaker. Bible House, 1891.

opinions. Without it they can hardly be maintained. This is freely admitted. "If the Law" says Dr. Cheyne, "as a whole were pre-exilic, the Psalter, at any rate a considerable part of it, should be pre-exilic too, unless indeed we go so far as to conjecture a pre-exilic Psalter akin to, though not so fine as our Psalter, which has been lost." (p. xxx.) The conclusion, then, of course holds true, that if the Psalter is not pre-exilic, it is neither a witness for a pre-exilic law nor any pre-exilic religious development, and such a fact would tend greatly to confirm the radical view of Israel's history and religion. Such a result Dr. Cheyne reaches, through the investigations presented in this volume. He finds, putting aside Psalm 18, and possibly lines or verses embedded here and there in later Psalms, that *the entire Psalter is post-exilic*.

The following is the line of argument. Attention is first called to the fact that the Psalter contains different groups of Psalms, represented partially by its books; and from the date of the latest of these, Books IV and V, the endeavor is made, by going backward, to fix the date of the earlier Psalms. In the examination of Books IV and V, the question is asked whether any Psalm requires a Maccabean date for its explanation. Such a one is found in Ps. 118. The historical background of this is regarded singularly clear and definite. Its occasion is held to have been the reconstruction and purification of the temple in 165 B. C. To the same period are assigned the other Hallelujah Psalms, Ps. 113-117, by the canon of criticism that "when certain Psalms, all of which agree in some leading feature and positively disagree in none, have come to us from ancient times in one group, we are bound to assign them to the same period, though it is only from one instance that we can from internal evidence speak positively as to the date." (p. 18.) By the application of this canon of criticism the conclusion is reached that Books IV and V received their present form soon after 142 B. C., edited by Simon the Maccabee. "We have no ancient record of it" it is said, "and yet perhaps it is more deserving of credence than the story of the completion of the library of the national records by Judas in the untrustworthy second book of Maccabees (II. 14)" (p. 11.)

The entire Psalter is thus examined in detail and the Psalms, either singly or in groups, are shown to be post-exilic.

With the general method of Dr. Cheyne's investigation we have no complaint. It is fair. The results of radical criticism are no where assumed, and the comparative method in the study of the Psalter is the true one. We cannot allow much weight to Jewish tradition, although it must not be entirely ignored or ruthlessly set aside. In the use of the comparative method, however, great care should be taken lest certain phenomena be denied their proper force, and subjective considerations become after all the more influential in the argument. Dr. Cheyne's work does not seem to us entirely free from this fault, or a perfectly clear and candid literary and historical investigation, but rather a brilliant adjustment of the phenomena of the Psalter in order that they may give desired results. He seems pressed forward into his views of the dates of the Psalms by his radicalism on other points, being guilty, though in the opposite way, of that with which he charges Dillmann "who" he says, speaking of his views of Isaiah, "is kept back by his *conservatism* on other points."

The starting point of our author's investigation is badly chosen. A period should have been taken upon which both radical and conservative critics could agree as epoch-making in the history of the Psalter. Such a one is that of the building and consecration of the second temple, of which the Psalter is the hymn-book. All critics allow that temple singers were among the exiles who returned from Babylon, and all agree that some of their songs are in the Psalter. One of these should have been made the starting point. From a psalm of this pivotal time the critic should begin his work of seeking for those of the same or an earlier or a later date. Instead of making such a selection, Dr. Cheyne has taken a Psalm, as the basis of his entire investigation, of a period of which tradition is silent in respect to its importance in the compilation of the Psalter. He appears also to have totally misapprehended the spirit of Ezra's age, for he says: "The re-organization of the people in Ezra's time was too

complete to allow any considerable influence to archaic liturgical formulæ." (p. 194.) We interpret the history of Ezra's time in another way. If ever archaic liturgical formulæ had influence, they had then, when the Mosaic law was greatly revered, and men wept at the thought of the glory of the first temple. And if any species of literature would have been preserved during the exile, it would have been songs of supplication unto Jehovah, and likewise those of faith with bright outlooks for the future. These would have been chanted by the rivers of Babylon and cherished on the return home. Yet according to Dr. Cheyne, so complete and novel was the reconstruction under Ezra and his associates, that these old hymns with one single exception were completely swept aside, or at least later editors weeded them out. Why then did not these literary revisers cast out also from the canon the pre-exilic prose writings such as the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, Zephaniah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, which, our radical friends allow are monuments of that period? Or were the hymns so much inferior in religious sentiment and feeling to the sermons? In short, the presumption is very strong in favor of a goodly number of pre-exilic Psalms being in the Psalter.

Let us look for example at Ps. 46, which is generally thought to commemorate the overthrow of Sennacherib's host. Of this Dr. Cheyne says, "The Jewish church in Isaiah's time was far too germinal to have sung these impressions of daring monotheism and impassioned love of the temple." (p. 164.) But when we turn to Isaiah's prophecies, we find the same daring monotheism and impassioned love. The Psalm in fact is a very echo of the thought, with the use likewise of the same figures and catch words which are found in Is. 8: 5-10, and might well have been composed by one of Isaiah's disciples, among whom had been sealed the prophet's teaching. Is. 2: 2, 3 shows that the prophet had profound regard for the temple. With this Psalm is to be associated Ps. 47 and perhaps 48.

The Psalms also which allude to a king are presumably pre-exilic. Dr. Cheyne is hard pressed to find subjects for these. Ptolemy Philadelphus is given as the subject of Psalms

45 and 72. This is very improbable. Only one committed to the necessity of making the Psalms post-exilic, we think, could have made such a supposition. Ps. 45 may well refer to the marriage of Joram and Athaliah, and a comparison of Ps. 72 with Isa. 11 suggests that Hezekiah may have been its subject, if we cannot carry it back to an earlier date. Simon the Maccabee is made, by Dr. Cheyne, the subject of Psalms 21, 61, 73, and 110. But Simon Maccabee was never a king. How then are we to explain the title? and how also that Psalms composed immediately, that is within a very few years, before the final editing and close of the Psalter by this same Simon, for this our author's views require, should be ascribed to David as all of these are? The "king," we are told, is used because "any other expression for a legal Jewish prince would have been intolerable in a Psalm framed on the Davidic model." "Rightly or wrongly, it was believed that a portion of the Psalms came from David or his age,"—hence the imitation. These Psalms were ascribed to David, as likewise Ps. 90 to Moses, "as a mark of distinction and to ensure for them the respect of future generations." We cannot accept these explanations and hold that the Psalms are of this untrustworthy, artificial nature, or that either composers or compilers resorted to such petty, if not fraudulent, contrivances to give honor and fame either to their own hymns or those of their contemporaries. We do not believe that they departed from actual history in following ancient models, or that David and Moses were given as the authors, however erroneously, except in good faith.

Dr. Cheyne allows that David is the author of the Laments over Jonathan and Abner, 2 Sam. 1: 19-27; 3: 33, 34. He grants that songs in praise of Jehovah might have been composed by him. "Only," he says, "that as critics we cannot consistently suppose that the religious songs of David (if there were any) were as much above the spiritual capacities of the people as the Psalms which, I will not say the later Jews, but which Ewald or Hitzig or Delitzsch would assign him." (p. 192.) From the point of view of the history of religion, "the supposition that we have Davidic Psalms, presents insuperable difficulties."

This, then, is the position taken. The Old Testament religion emerged from such rude and primitive ideas of God that the faith and devotion, and the religions, of any of the Psalms would be anachronisms in the time of David. We cannot accept this conclusion. Dr. Cheyne can present no historic proof of his view. It rests on an assumed law of religious development. With writers like Kuenen, our author apparently holds "that the rudimentary, initial stage in a process of religious development cannot possibly anticipate the features of a more advanced stage, but must necessarily present the religious element in human nature under its rudest forms." We do not believe this. Some of the purest and noblest of religious ideas are the oldest, as is seen, for example, in the Accadian Psalms. In rudimentary periods certain conceptions may be given which, like mountain peaks, rise apparently far above those of the ages which follow, or whose level is only reached after many years. Is it not so, for example, with Paul's description of charity or John's conception of God? May not the first thoughts of men on religion be better than their second, and their last and best thoughts in a sense be a return to their first? We believe that the histories of religions in many instances show this to have been the case.

David's character also was no mere fancy of later ages. However much he was idealized, his noble generosity and deep devotion to Jehovah, as well as his military and organizing ability, were real. In these qualities he certainly surpassed his contemporaries and many of his successors. Thus, likewise, he may have uttered religious thoughts which seem to antedate his time, and to which as a whole the people did not for a long period attain. Dr. Cheyne assumes, apparently, in this connection (although elsewhere he allows it) that a psalmist must speak not as an individual, but only as a reflector of the common thought of the church. Speaking of Psalms 3 and 4, he says, "Search the story of David's life from end to end, and you will find no situation which corresponds to these psalms and for the very good reason that the Jewish church, in whose name the psalmist speaks, did not exist." (p. 236.) But these two psalms fit beauti-

fully into the circumstances of David's flight from Absalom, as we are justified in imagining them. Of the Guest-psalms, viz., 15, 24: 1-6, 27: 1-6, and 23, he says, "Why is forgiven Israel so joyful? Because it is delivered from earthly trouble? Yes, but chiefly because it can once more fearlessly enter Jehovah's house. Most who have followed me thus far will readily admit that they imply the existence of the second temple." (p. 236.) Not at all. This joy could just as well have arisen at the time when the ark, which had so long been sequestered, was taken with joyful melody to Jerusalem, and a new sanctuary of Jehovah was established in the place of the ruined one of Shiloh. How natural also for David, the founder of this new sanctuary and the proposer of the temple, to have emphasized the guestship of the worshipers of Jehovah.*

In short, Dr. Cheyne's argument to bring the Psalter as a whole down to the post-exilic period, while exceedingly ingenious, thorough and very suggestive, is unconvincing. It involves literary difficulties twice as great as those from which he endeavors to escape, for it either renders entirely valueless all the traditions which the editors have embodied in the inscriptions, or else it makes the inscriptions petty artifices adopted by editors to enhance the value of the sacred hymns. Pre-exilic Psalms there must have been, as we have said, and it is inconceivable how they all could have been lost or deemed unworthy of a place in the temple hymn-book.

The difficulties also presented by the Septuagint, Dr. Cheyne does not remove. We give his attempts. He says, "It is asked, (1) How are we to account for the fact that none of the Psalms are ascribed in this version to the age of

*In Dr. Cheyne's Commentary on the Psalms, in reference to Ps. 15:1, he says, "Social customs are one great source of religious imagery, and so it is not surprising that we find a Hebrew worshiper describing himself as a guest of Jehovah, and Phœnician inscriptions containing the names Gersacun ('guest of Sacun'), Germelkart ('guest of Melkart'), Gerastart ('guest of Astarte'), and even Gerhecal ('guest of the temple'). The prominent idea in all these names is not so much participation in the sacrificial feasts, as Renan would have it, but the enjoyment of divine protection; compare the Arabic phrase for an inhabitant of Mecca, *jar-ullah*, 'God-protected one.' The faithful worshiper has as it were 'taken sanctuary,' whether he lives near his god's shrine or not." If this comment is correct, there is certainly no need of referring Guest-Psalms to the second Temple.

the Maccabees? But of course the Egyptian-Jewish community received no information on the subject of Maccabean Psalms. It was not for the interest of the Jerusalem editors to publish a recent origin of a portion of the Psalms. The title of Ps. 110, for instance, shows that the Psalm was regarded as worthy of having been written in the Davidic age. (2) Another Septuagint difficulty is this, How comes it that the Alexandrine translator misunderstands both headings of phrases in several of those Psalms which (according to the hypothesis) belong to the Greek age? Instances of the former case occur in Psalms 16 and 56-60, and of the latter in Ps. 110. Similar objections may be raised to any historical hypothesis, however probable, and thoroughly decisive answers must be wanting until some private journal of the actors of history is discovered. I do not myself feel the objections to be important. "As for the titles, the Jewish scribes may have forgotten their meaning at the time when the temple music was reorganized and the Psalter re-edited by Simon. And as for the mistaken sense of some passages, how hard it must have been to read Hebrew with accuracy before the square character became general." These answers do not remove the difficulties. The first implies too much ignorance upon the part of the Egyptian Jews, and too much guileful craft on the part of the scribes of Jerusalem. The second reply is far from convincing when we remember that, according to Dr. Cheyne, Books IV and V of the Psalter received their present form soon after 142 B. C., and scholars are generally agreed that the Septuagint version cannot be much later than 130 B. C. Surely the Alexandrine Jews must have been in hot haste for a translation.